

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula $R^1-Y^1-P(NR^2R^3)_2$ which comprises:

a) reacting a compound of formula PX_3 with a compound of formula HNR^2R^3 in the presence of a solvent to form a compound of formula $X-P(NR^2R^3)_2$; and

b) reacting the compound of formula $X-P(NR^2R^3)_2$ with a compound of formula R^1-Y^1-H in the presence of a solvent to form the compound of formula $R^1-Y^1-P(NR^2R^3)_2$;

wherein

R^1 represents a ~~phosphorus protecting methyl group~~, a group of formula $-CH_2CH_2-Si(CH_3)_2C_6H_5$, $-CH_2CH_2-S(O)_2-CH_2CH_3$ or $-CH_2CH_2-C_6H_4-NO_2$, a group of formula $-CH_2CH_2CN$, or a phenyl, 4-chlorophenyl, 2-chlorophenyl, 2-nitrophenyl or 4-nitrophenyl group;

R^2 and R^3 each independently represent an alkyl group, or R^2 and R^3 are joined, together with the N to which they are attached, to form a 5-7 membered ring;

Y^1 represents O or S; and

X represents a halogen;

characterised in that the same solvent is employed in reaction a) and reaction b) and said solvent is a hydrocarbon solvent.

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended): A process according to claim 3 1, wherein R^1 represents a group of formula $-CH_2CH_2CN$ and Y^1 represents O.

5. (currently amended): A process according to claim 1 or claim 4, wherein R^2 and R^3 each independently represent a C_{1-6} alkyl group.

6. (original): A process according to claim 5, wherein R^2 and R^3 represent isopropyl groups.

7. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1, wherein Y^1 represents O.

8. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1, wherein X represents Cl.
9. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1, wherein the hydrocarbon solvent is toluene.
10. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction between the compound of formula $X-P(NR^2R^3)_2$ and the compound of formula R^1-Y^1-H in step b) takes place in the presence of a base.
11. (original): A process according to claim 10, wherein the base is a tri(C₁₋₄alkyl)amine.
12. (original): A process for the preparation of $\{[(CH_3)_2CH]_2N\}_2P-O-CH_2CH_2CN$, which comprises
a) reacting PCl_3 with $[(CH_3)_2CH]_2N-H$ in toluene to form $\{[(CH_3)_2CH]_2N\}_2P-Cl$; and
b) reacting $\{[(CH_3)_2CH]_2N\}_2P-Cl$ with $HO-CH_2CH_2CN$ in toluene to form $\{[(CH_3)_2CH]_2N\}_2P-O-CH_2CH_2CN$.
13. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 or claim 12, wherein substantially anhydrous reaction conditions are employed.
14. (currently amended): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula $R^1-Y^1-P(NR^2R^3)_2$ which comprises reacting a compound of formula $X-P(NR^2R^3)_2$ with a compound of formula R^1-Y^1-H in the presence of a solvent to form the compound of formula $R^1-Y^1-P(NR^2R^3)_2$
wherein
 ~~R^1 represents a phosphorus protecting group;~~
 ~~R^2 and R^3 each independently represent an alkyl group, or R^2 and R^3 are joined, together with the N to which they are attached, to form a 5-7 membered ring;~~
 ~~Y^1 represents O or S; and~~
~~X represents a halogen;~~
characterised in that the solvent is a hydrocarbon solvent $NCCH_2CH_2-$; Y^1 represents O; R^2 and R^3 are each isopropyl, X is chloro, and the solvent is toluene.
15. (canceled)